



U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

PRESS RELEASE

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**Statement of Senator Daniel K. Inouye
Navy and Marine Corps Budget Overview Hearing
March 16, 2011**

“The Subcommittee meets this morning to receive testimony on the Fiscal Year 2012 budget request for the United States Navy and Marine Corps. I am pleased to welcome the Secretary of the Navy, Ray Mabus, the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Gary Roughead, and the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General James Amos, and I look forward to their testimony.

“I would like to thank each of the witnesses for their prepared testimony, particularly their comments on the impact that a long-term continuing resolution would have on the Navy and Marine Corps. Without objection, their full statements will be made part of the record.

“For fiscal year 2012, the President’s budget requests \$161.4 billion in base funding for the Department of the Navy. This is an increase of just one half of one percent over last year’s request. In addition, the budget seeks to reduce overseas contingency operation funding from \$18.5 billion to \$15 billion, reflecting the changing missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“The very low growth of the Navy and Marine Corps budget is partly attributable to the Secretary of Defense’s efficiency program. The request includes many commendable proposals, such as cutting energy costs by making our ships, aircraft, and facilities more efficient and increasing the use of alternative energy sources.

“But the Committee may have questions about other programs that are claimed as cost savings. For example, the Marine Corps’ Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle has been terminated, and three new programs are being established to fill the void. While we know how much money will be saved by cancelling the EFV, it is hard to estimate how much money we will spend on the three follow-on programs.

“In an age of tightening budgets, Congress needs to have a clear understanding of which budgetary proposals will produce real savings that can be better invested for our service members, as opposed to delaying tough spending decisions for another day.

“While the Committee will have many questions about the proposed budget over the coming months, there is no doubt about the importance of the Navy and Marine Corps in the world today. Even while supporting combat missions overseas, Marines and sailors are now performing life-saving humanitarian relief efforts in Japan after the catastrophic earthquake and tsunami.

“They are delivering supplies, searching for survivors, and rendering aid to the victims of this disaster. The people of the United States and Japan are grateful for the life-saving efforts of these men and women, and our thoughts are with all of the victims of this terrible disaster.

“In these challenging fiscal times, it is all the more important that each dollar that Congress provides to the Navy and Marine Corps is put to its fullest use. I am mindful that many of the budget proposals that were delivered to Congress in February were based on deliberations that occurred last summer and fall.

“No matter how well planned the budget may be, it cannot predict the future. It is the job of this Committee and Congress to make adjustments to the defense budget to redirect unneeded spending to higher priorities, based on new information and developments.

“This hearing is just the beginning of the process of learning how the budget request will support our national priorities. I look forward to working with our distinguished panel throughout the year, so that our fiscal year 2012 appropriations bill will best reflect the needs of our armed forces.

“I now turn to the Vice Chairman of the Committee, Senator Cochran, for his opening statement.”